



A graduate speaks: how I found working at Investment Coach

By [Dale Shepperson](#) | 00:01:00 | 30 September 2009

[Following from Andrew Reeves' article last week, recent graduate Dale Shepperson reports on how his work placement at Investment Coach went.](#)

Since recently graduating from the University of Manchester with a degree in economics I have been all too aware of the difficult climate facing new graduates, especially those looking for a career in financial services. My initial intention was to go straight into postgraduate study this September. However, I became concerned that I may face a similar job climate next year when competition for graduate opportunities is likely to be extremely high and may be even tougher than it is now. So I decided to delay my postgraduate study until 2010 and in the meantime improve my CV, and hopefully future job opportunities, by gaining additional work experience and shadowing individuals in the financial services sector.

I began to search out and contact local firms in the area. The Investment Coach website immediately captured my interest. The site looks fantastic, and provides a wealth of information to anyone interested in financial services whether they be prospective clients or just generally interested.

Learning from experience

The firm is under the directorship of Andrew Reeves and, after checking his previous history on the site, it quickly became clear to me that he was extremely well qualified as a chartered financial planner. Given that this would be my introduction into the industry, I was eager to ensure I learned from an experienced adviser. Andrew achieved the rank of fellow at a young age and was the first in the UK to achieve the ISO 22222 standard, so I was extremely enthusiastic about getting a placement with his firm.

I called Andrew to talk about the possibility of a placement. From the outset he was very positive and quickly offered to arrange a meeting. At the meeting we discussed the placement opportunity and Andrew offered me the chance to write this article to express my views on financial planning. I felt extremely lucky. I expected a much less enthusiastic reception given the difficulties still faced in the industry.

Structured placement

From day one it was clear that Andrew had taken considerable time to structure my stay at The Investment Coach to ensure I learned as much as possible. He also took time to include me in all areas of the business. For example, having been at the firm for only a few hours (and after a crash course in annuities), he included me in a meeting with a broker consultant from MGM discussing enhanced annuities.

The learning curve was steep, but I thoroughly enjoyed the challenge and could see that Andrew was taking time to encourage my keen interest in the industry.

As the week progressed Andrew introduced me to the range of systems the business uses and to the client process.

This began with an introduction to the back office software, FilesAnywhere, and later I was shown the methods used to determine risk profiles for lifetime cash flow models, using the Australian program FinaMetrica.

I was particularly impressed with how these new programs are aimed at actively engaging the client in the whole process, which undoubtedly increases the transparency of the business to the client and in my view the overall reputation of the industry. From my discussions with Andrew, I understand that this topic is discussed increasingly among financial advisers, where the industry may still be suffering from the public perception of the financial crisis and global recession.

Regulation and qualification

In the final days of my placement at The Investment Coach I was shown the regulatory procedures the firm undertakes to comply with guidelines set by the Financial Services Authority. And Andrew explained what qualifications I would need if I chose to pursue a career in financial planning.

My experience of financial planning during my time at The Investment Coach was extremely positive and I am left baffled about why there are not more graduates in the industry. Such has been the success of my placement week that I am considering taking the CF1-CF5 examinations this year to gain the necessary qualifications for financial planning before my postgraduate study next September.

I must say a big thank you to Andrew Reeves at The Investment Coach for taking so much time to give me a thorough insight into the business and industry as a whole, without which I may never have realised the exciting opportunities available to me in pursuing a career in financial planning.

[Read Andrew Reeves' perspective on the work placement](#)